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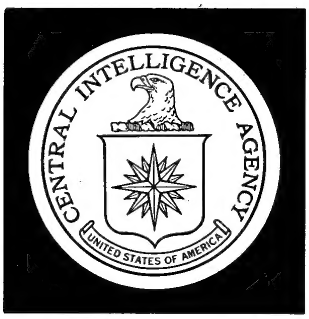

The President's Daily Brief

6 May 1971

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~~*Top Secret*~~ 50X1

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

6 May 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Latest satellite photography shows additional sites for new large Soviet ICBM silos. *(Page 1)*

Presence of SA-6 missile launchers in Egypt confirmed. *(Page 2)*

[redacted] Israel. *(Page 3)* 50X1

Communist Chinese permit US foreign representatives at Canton trade fair. *(Page 4)*

Sirik Matak's cabinet in Cambodia is analyzed on *Page 5*.

At Annex we present a look at the military situation in Laos at the close of the dry season.

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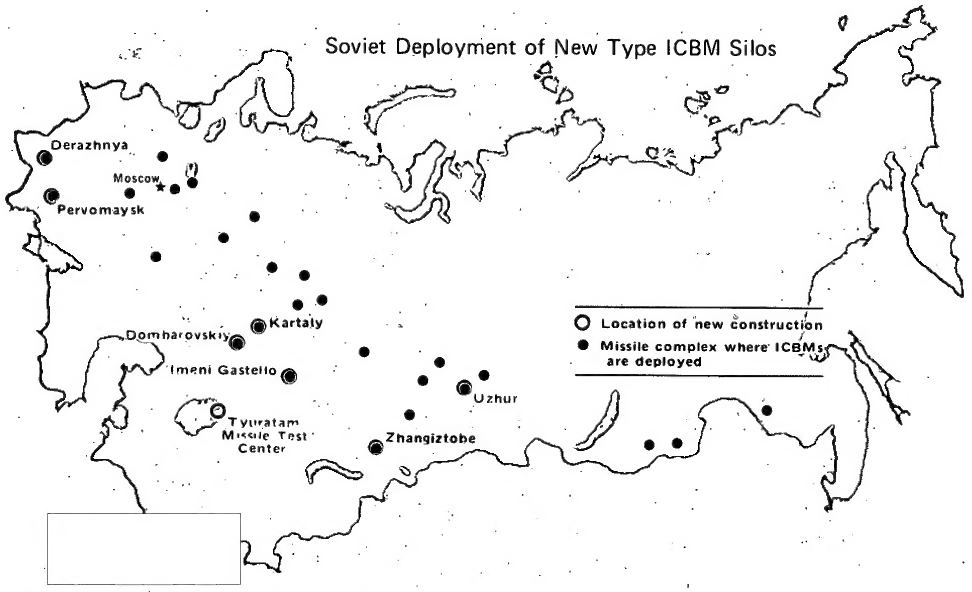

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USSR

The latest satellite photography, which partially covered 24 Soviet missile complexes, shows 11 additional sites under construction for the large new ICBM silos. We have now identified a total of 56 such sites--54 confirmed and two probable. They are located at four SS-9 complexes, at the Derazhnya MRBM complex, and at the Pervomaysk IRBM complex. There is a possibility, although we cannot be certain, that the new type of silo is also located at the SS-9 complex at Kartaly.

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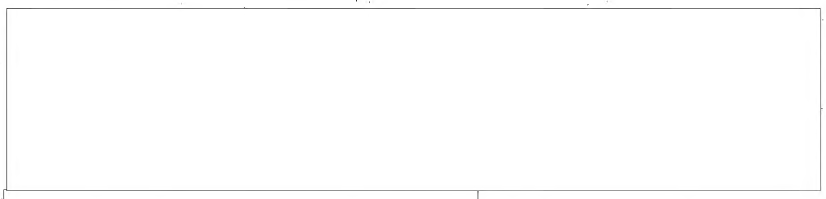

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Analysis of the photography is continuing, and the number of sites and details concerning them are subject to change as the review goes on.

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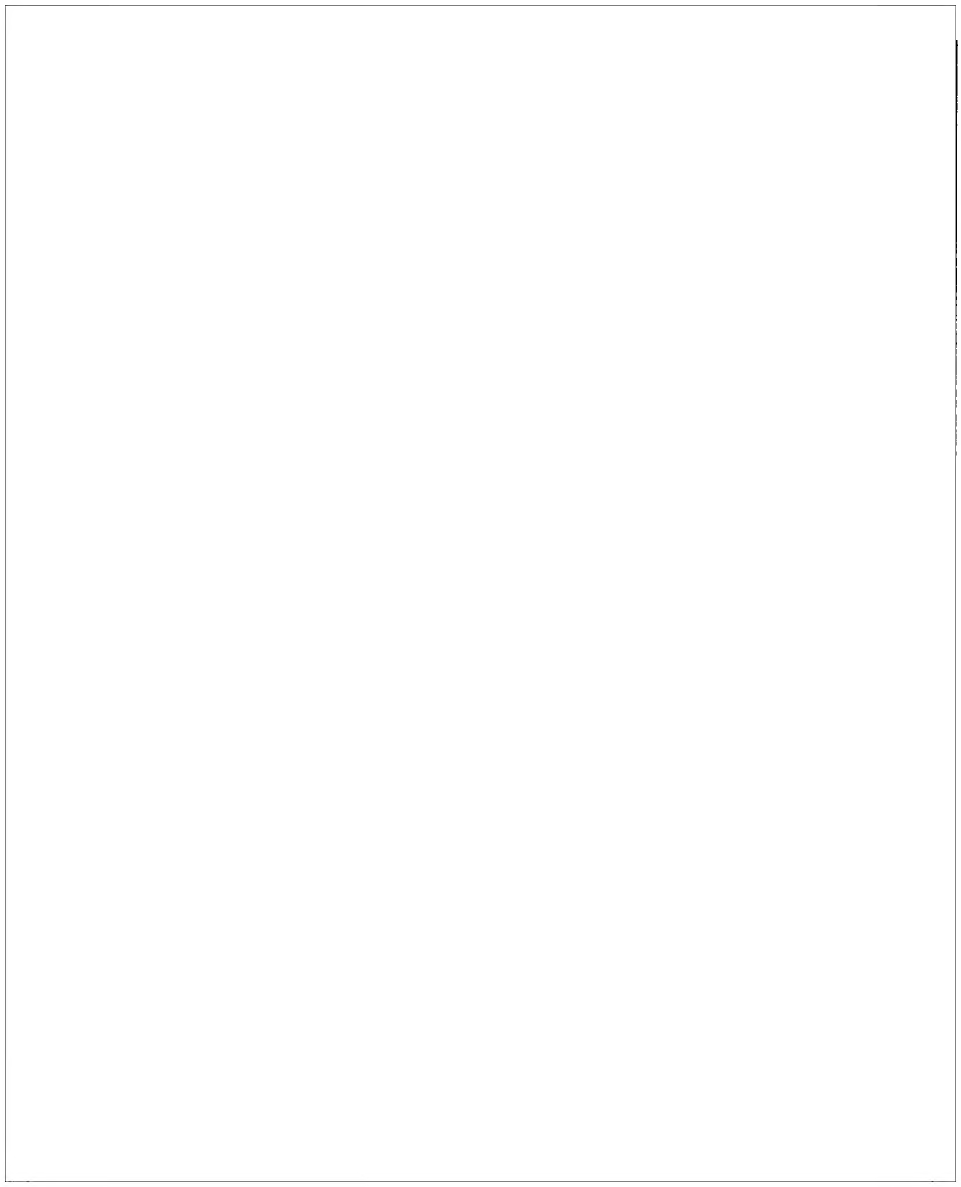

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EGYPT-USSR

Recent satellite photography has confirmed the presence of the SA-6 modern low-altitude SAM system in Egypt [redacted] 50X1
[redacted] Twelve launchers of this 50X1
system were seen at four sites near the Aswan High Dam and airfield.

SA-6s may also be deployed around Idfu, some 55 miles north of Aswan; [redacted] 50X1
[redacted] 50X1
[redacted] *Idfu is* 50X1
a transportation center on one of the few highways connecting the Red Sea coast with the Nile Valley.

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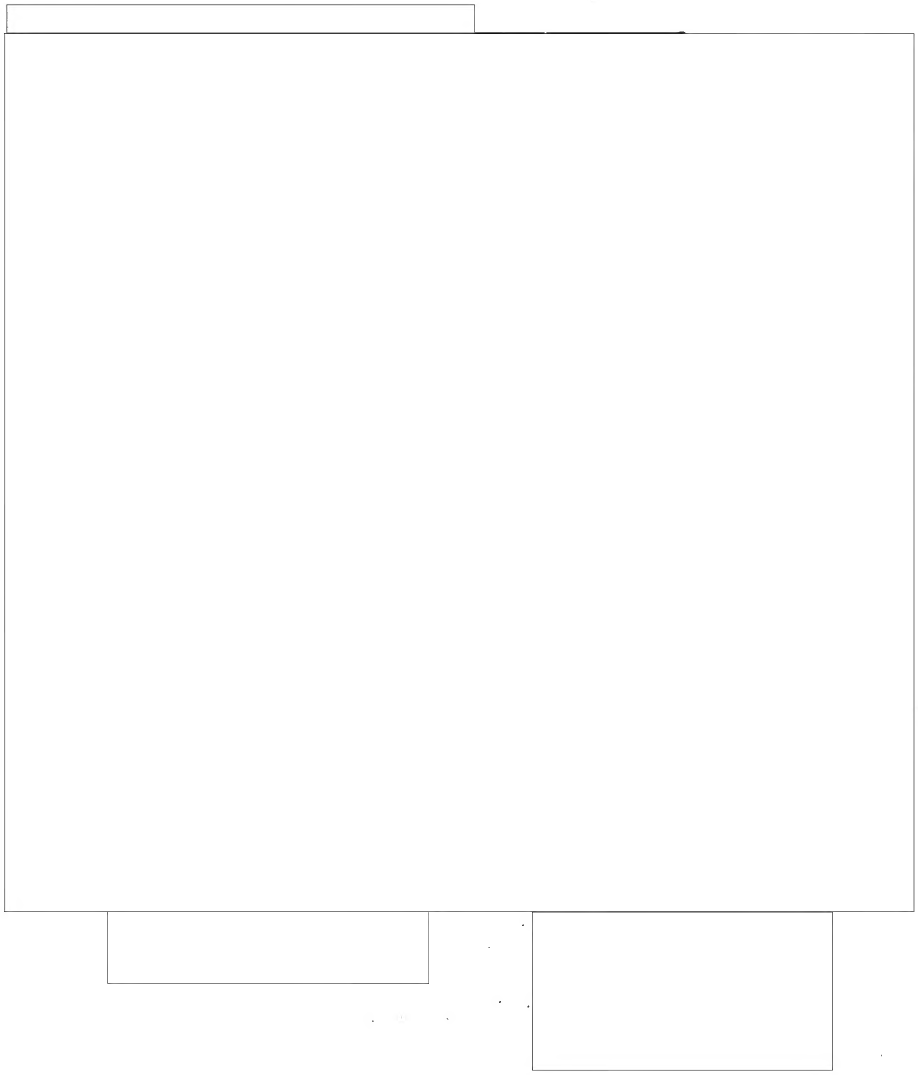

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ISRAEL

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

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COMMUNIST CHINA

The Chinese are willing to permit foreign representatives of American subsidiary firms to attend the current Canton trade fair--the first time they have done so. The Chinese have also made tentative inquiries about the possibility of buying certain products directly from US companies in the future.

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50X1

Peking has shown no inclination to backpedal on its response to US initiatives despite recent harsh propaganda attacks on remarks by the State Department's press spokesman concerning the "unsettled" question of Taiwan's sovereignty. Peking's reaction followed by three days Taipei's official demarche on the subject and was in part designed to avoid appearing less "Chinese" than the Nationalists on this sensitive issue. By contrasting the US position on Taiwan with recent "gestures to improve relations with China," Peking is attempting to focus on the outstanding problem in Sino-US relations without rejecting these gestures.

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CAMBODIA

In Sirik Matak's proposed cabinet, he will act as his own defense minister; Foreign Affairs Minister Koun Wick is to retain that position; and National Assembly President In Tam is slated to become first vice premier and minister of interior. Matak's nominee for second deputy prime minister in charge of economic affairs is Sok Chhong, now director of the National Commercial Bank. Hang Thun Hak, the popular minister of community development, evidently is to retain that portfolio, while also serving as third deputy prime minister. Matak is filling the remaining ten cabinet slots with junior bureaucrats, most of whom seem to be reasonably well qualified for their respective responsibilities.

Just last week Matak indicated that he was opposed to making extensive changes in cabinet personnel. His decision to reverse that stand is politically prudent, however, and his elimination of some old guard officials should be greeted with satisfaction by his reform-minded critics. Although Son Ngoc Thanh was left out of the new government, Thanh claims that Sok Chhong and Hang Thun Hak are members of "his group."

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NOTE

Ceylon: An official spokesman claims that just under 4,000 insurgents surrendered during the truce unilaterally proclaimed by the government from 1 through 4 May. Intercepted police reports, however, show the number to be closer to 2,900, and even this figure seems inflated. The rebels, meanwhile, have continued scattered attacks, often directing them against civilians as well as security patrols. Government forces intend to intensify operations into areas of rebel strength, but it is doubtful that they have the capacity to carry out an effective campaign.

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ANNEX

LAOS

The dry season is drawing to an end in north Laos and with each passing day the prospects are better that the Communists' military objectives in the region will for one season more have been thwarted. This does not mean that Vang Pao's forces are out of the woods; the Communists are still dug in near Long Tieng, they have built up substantial stockpiles, and they may mount one more attempt to crack the will of the weary defenders. Even if Long Tieng holds, the accumulated effects of the Communist campaign have been such that there are serious questions concerning the longer term capabilities of the Meo and the Thai to maintain the government positions west of the Plaine des Jarres.

The vagaries of the weather in this part of the world are such that it is not possible to predict exactly when the heavy rains will begin, but if the normal patterns hold, the Communists cannot count on much more than another three or four weeks of good fighting weather. The Communists find it difficult to supply and otherwise support advanced units over inundated roads and trails and the cross-country movement of troops under monsoonal conditions is both slow and painful. For these reasons, the Communists in past years have been forced back on the defensive during the summer, and the government, enjoying the luxury of moving troops and supplies by air, has been able to seize the initiative.

In the last ten days, elements of at least one North Vietnamese battalion of the 174th Regiment have pulled out of the front lines for what one Communist message describes as "rest and recuperation." Another of the regiment's battalions has also moved from the Ban Na area, although it appears that this unit may remain west of the Plaine. Although this could be the beginning of a rainy season regroupment, we believe that such a judgment would be premature.

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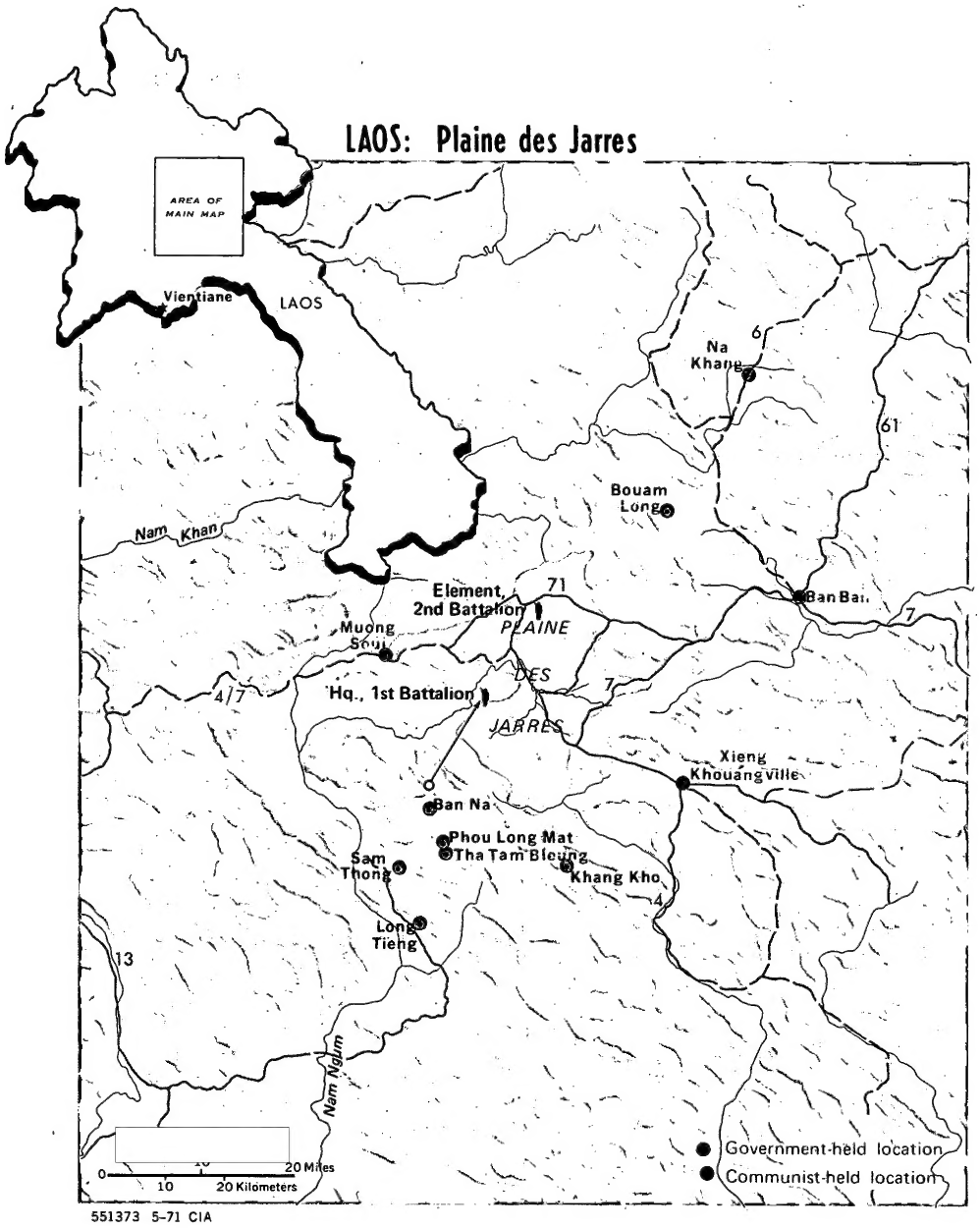

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The military leaders in Hanoi cannot be pleased about the way the war in the north has developed this year. After three months of sometimes heavy warfare west of the Plaine des Jarres, the Communists are not much closer to pushing the government out of the Long Tieng complex than they were last year. The Communists have been engaged in a kind of positional warfare that has proved to be costly in both lives and material, and Vang Pao's mobile tactics have kept them off balance. The Communists' strategy west of the Plaine has not been particularly resourceful or imaginative, but it has been consonant with the physical restraints under which they are operating and the relatively low priority they attach to achieving their objectives.

In a nutshell, the North Vietnamese have been hoping that by applying steady pressure--particularly by shelling--they would cause the [redacted] defenders to abandon the defense of Long Tieng. With very few exceptions, the Communists have avoided massing their forces for frontal assaults against fixed positions. Such tactics have the advantage of limiting losses, but they also run a greater risk of failure. If Hanoi attached the highest importance to driving Vang Pao from Long Tieng, it seems likely that it would have been more willing than it has been thus far to take the heavy losses and provide the additional manpower that an all-out campaign would have involved. 50X1

With time running out on them, the Communists have only two basic courses of action remaining. They could try to turn the situation around with an all-out assault against Long Tieng or its outlying defense positions. This, of course, would involve a change in tactics--and battlefield innovation is not a strong Communist trait. Moreover, the enemy is not currently in a good posture to make such an offensive work. The government's defensive force has grown to about 10,000 men, while the Communists can probably muster only about half that number in combat troops for an eleventh-hour drive. The Communists' failure to exploit the Thai irregular abandonment of Ban Na a month ago and the Communists' recent loss of Khang Kho are good evidence of the difficulties they are experiencing in establishing some momentum in the Long Tieng campaign.

(continued)

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The second course open to the Communists is the easier for them to pursue because it involves little more than a continuation of current tactics. The North Vietnamese have good battlefield intelligence; they must know that the government defenders are weary of the long struggle and that there is always a chance that the Long Tieng position will simply collapse under the weight of accumulated pressures. The greatest single threat to the government position is the morale of its troops. The Meo irregulars are fewer in numbers and weaker in spirit than at any time in recent years

50X1

Although such matters can change quickly, at this juncture it looks as if the government's morale problems are manageable, and that unless the Communists throw more into the effort, the irregulars should hold into the rainy season. The Communists could then fight a defensive holding action west of the Plaine--as they did last year--in order to maintain a foothold for the 1971-72 dry season campaign.

There is, of course, nothing immutable about the seasonal nature of the war in north Laos, and despite the difficulties, it is possible that the Communists will undertake major offensive activity well into June or even July. There is, however, no evidence that this is the route the Communists will go if things do not break their way in the next few weeks. Thus, unless the Communists make a major new move in the near future, it seems likely that the stalemate in northern Laos will be extended for another season.

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